
***DirectionFinder*[®] Survey**

Executive Summary Report

Overview

Purpose. During the fall of 2005, ETC Institute administered a *DirectionFinder*[®] Survey for Miami-Dade County to assess resident satisfaction with the delivery of major county services and to help determine priorities for the community as part of the County's ongoing planning process.

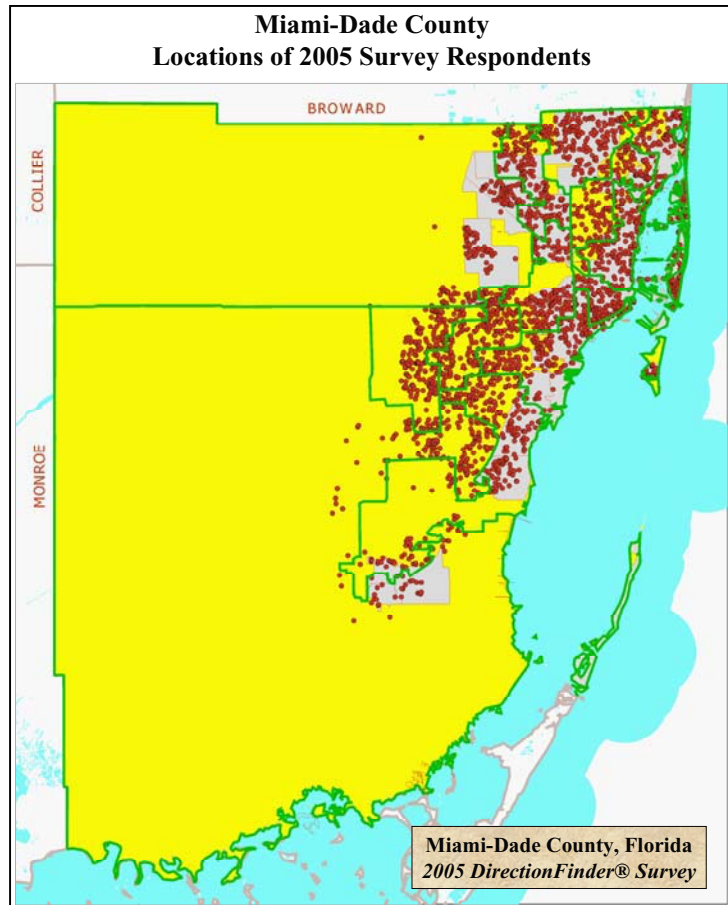
Survey Description and Methodology. The survey was seven-pages in length and took the typical respondent about 20 minutes to complete. In November, the survey was mailed to a random sample of 14,900 households in Miami-Dade County. Approximately seven days after the surveys were mailed, residents who received the survey were contacted by phone. Those who indicated that they had not returned the survey were given the option of completing it by phone. Of the households that received a survey, 1,201 completed the survey by phone and 1,947 returned it by mail for a total of 3,148 completed surveys (a 21% response rate). The survey was administered in English, Spanish, and Creole.

The sample was stratified to ensure the completion of at least 200 surveys in each of the County's thirteen commission districts. The overall results of the survey have a precision of at least +/-2% at the 95% level of confidence. The results for each commission district have a precision of at least +/-6.5% at the 95% level of confidence. There were no statistically significant differences in the results of the survey based on the method of administration (phone vs. mail).

Geocoding. Since Miami-Dade County does not provide all services to the entire County, ETC Institute geocoded the home address of respondents to the survey. The geocoding process allowed the results of the survey to be analyzed for specific areas, including the following:

- **Unincorporated Municipal Service Area (UMSA).** Services that are only provided to the unincorporated areas of the county were assessed based on the Unincorporated Municipal Service Area (UMSA).

- **Police Service Area.** Police and public safety ratings were assessed based on the areas where the County is responsible for providing police services.
- **Fire Station Service Area.** Questions related to the perceived quality of fire services were assessed based on the areas where the County is responsible for providing fire services.
- **Fire Rescue Service Area.** Questions related to the perceived quality of the county's emergency medical services were assessed based on the areas where the County is responsible for providing fire rescue services.
- **Waste Collection Service Area.** Questions related to the perceived quality of trash, recycling, and other waste collection services were assessed based on the areas where the County is responsible for providing these services.
- **Library Service Area.** Questions related to the perceived quality of library services were assessed based on the areas where the County is responsible for providing library services.
- **Street Assessment Area.** Questions related to the perceived quality of county streets were assessed based on the proximity of respondents to county-maintained streets. Only residents who lived within one mile of a county-maintained street were included in the assessment of county streets.



Don't Know Responses. The percentage of "don't know" responses has been excluded from many of the graphs shown in this report to facilitate valid comparisons of the results from Miami-Dade County with the results from other communities in ETC Institute's *DirectionFinder®* database. Since the number of "don't know" responses often reflects the utilization and awareness of county services, the percentage of "don't know" responses has been provided in the tabular data section of this report. When the "don't know" responses have been

excluded, the text of this report will indicate that the responses have been excluded with the phrase “*who had an opinion*”.

This report contains:

- an executive summary of the methodology and major findings
- charts depicting the overall results of the survey
- importance-satisfaction analysis to help the County use survey data to set priorities
- benchmarking data that shows how the survey results for Miami-Dade compare to other large communities
- crosstabulations that show the overall results of each question on the survey for the County as a whole and for each commission district
- a copy of the survey instrument.

Major Findings

The following section describes findings from several of the topics that were assessed on the survey.

- **Perceptions of the County.** Two-thirds (67%) of the residents surveyed in the UMSA *who had an opinion* thought that Miami-Dade County was an “excellent” or “good” place to live. Fifty-two percent (52%) of those surveyed thought that the County was an “excellent” or “good” place to work, 42% thought the County was an “excellent” or “good” place to retire, and 43% thought the County was an “excellent” or “good” place to raise children.
- **Public Safety.** The highest levels of satisfaction with public safety services in the County’s police and fire service areas based upon the combined percentage of “very satisfied” and “satisfied” responses among residents *who had an opinion* were: the quality of fire services (82%), the quality of local emergency ambulance services (79%) and the quality of police services (61%). Residents were least satisfied with the enforcement of local traffic laws (44%).
- **County Transportation.** The highest levels of satisfaction with county transportation services, based upon the combined percentage of “very satisfied” and “satisfied” responses among residents *who had an opinion*

were: Miami Seaport Services (52%), Miami International Airport services (50%), and the maintenance of County streets (48%). Residents were least satisfied with the management of traffic flow on County streets (26%).

- **Mass Transit.** The highest levels of satisfaction with mass transit services in Miami-Dade County based upon the combined percentage of “very satisfied” and “satisfied” responses among residents *who had an opinion* were: the reliability of train services (57%), the frequency of train service (54%), and the cleanliness of train stops (46%). Residents were least satisfied with the frequency of bus services (24%).
- **Health and Human Services.** The highest levels of satisfaction with health and human services in the County based upon the combined percentage of “very satisfied” and “satisfied” responses among residents *who had an opinion* were: the availability of services for the disabled (45%), the availability of services to seniors (43%), and the availability of services to children (40%). Residents were least satisfied with the availability of affordable housing (17%).
- **Water and Sewer Services.** The level of satisfaction with water and sewer services was relatively high in all areas that were rated. Based upon the combined percentage of “very satisfied” and “satisfied” responses among residents *who had an opinion* 75% of those surveyed were satisfied with the overall quality of drinking water and 70% were satisfied with the quality of sewer (wastewater treatment) services.
- **County Communication.** The highest levels of satisfaction with county communication based upon the combined percentage of “very satisfied” and “satisfied” responses among residents *who had an opinion*, were with the County’s web site (61%), information programming on Miami-Dade TV (42%), and the effectiveness of County communication with the public (38%). Residents were least satisfied with the level of public involvement in Miami-Dade County government (26%).
- **Maintenance of Streets.** The highest levels of satisfaction with the maintenance of streets among residents who had an opinion and lived within one-mile of a county street about **major streets**: were: the quality of road signs (55%), the overall smoothness (51%), and the overall cleanliness (48%). Residents were least satisfied with the prevention of street flooding on major streets (39%). The highest levels of satisfaction among residents with **side streets** were: the quality of road signs (54%), the overall smoothness (51%) and overall cleanliness (49%) Residents were least satisfied with side roads in the area of preventing flooding (41%).

- **Community Appearance.** The highest levels of satisfaction with the appearance of Miami-Dade County based upon the combined percentage of “very satisfied” and “satisfied” responses among residents in the UMSA *who had an opinion* were: the appearance of resident neighborhoods (65%), the maintenance of residential property in resident areas (63%), and the maintenance of business property in resident areas (56%). Residents were least satisfied with the cleanliness of waterways near their home (49%).
- **Community Planning/Development.** The highest levels of satisfaction with Community Planning Development in Miami-Dade County based upon the combined percentage of “very satisfied” and “satisfied” responses among residents in the UMSA *who had an opinion* were: the development and land use within resident neighborhoods (38%), the tax collector’s office (33%), and the property appraiser’s office (29%). Residents were least satisfied with the effectiveness of County efforts to revitalize low income areas (19%).
- **Parks and Park Programs.** The highest levels of satisfaction with parks and park programs in Miami-Dade County based upon the combined percentage of “very satisfied” and “satisfied” responses among residents in the UMSA *who had an opinion* were: the quality of park ground maintenance (61%), the quality of the County park system (59%), and the quality of park facilities and maintenance (57%). Residents were least satisfied with the availability of park programs (46%).
- **Library Services.** The level of satisfaction with library services among residents in the County’s library service area was relatively high in all areas that were rated. Based upon the combined percentage of “very satisfied” and “satisfied” responses among respondents *who had an opinion* were: 72% were satisfied with the quality of the County’s library system, 71% were satisfied with the quality of the library facilities and maintenance, 66% were satisfied with the availability of materials, and 66% were satisfied with the hours libraries are open.

Positive Trends

Some of the positive trends that were identified in the survey are listed below:

- **Satisfaction with the Overall Quality of County Services Increased Significantly.** Fifty-one percent (51%) of the residents surveyed in the UMSA *who had an opinion* were satisfied with the overall quality of services provided by Miami-Dade County compared to 37% in 2003.

- **Resident Feel Safer Than They Did Two Years Ago.** Seventy-eight (78%) of those surveyed in the County's police service area indicated they feel safe walking alone during the day compared to 55% in 2003. Fifty percent (50%) of those surveyed indicated they feel safe walking alone at night compared to 32% in 2003.
- **Resident Feel Better About Miami-Dade County as a Place to Live.** Sixty-seven percent (67%) of those surveyed in the UMSA rated Miami-Dade County as an "excellent" or "good" place to live compared to 41% in 2003.
- **Satisfaction with the Smoothness of County Roads Has Increased Significantly.** Fifty-one percent (51%) of those surveyed who lived within one-mile of a County road were satisfied with the smoothness of major county roads compared to 38% in 2003.

Negative Trends

Some of the negative trends that were identified in the survey are listed below:

- **Overall satisfaction with health and human services provided by Miami-Dade County has decreased.** Thirty percent (30%) of the residents surveyed *who had an opinion* were satisfied with the quality of health and human services provided by Miami-Dade County compared to 43% in 2003.
- **Overall satisfaction with Miami International Airport decreased.** Fifty percent (50%) of the residents surveyed *who had an opinion* were satisfied with the quality of service provided by Miami International Airport compared to 60% in 2003.
- **Overall satisfaction with Miami Seaport services decreased.** Fifty-two percent (52%) of the residents surveyed *who had an opinion* were satisfied with the quality of service provided by Miami Seaport compared to 68% in 2003.

Other Findings

- More than three-fourths (79%) of the residents surveyed indicated that they knew how to get information during an emergency.
- 55% of those surveyed in the UMSA indicated that they get information about county programs and services from local television/cable news; 49% indicated that they get information from the *Miami Herald*; and 44% indicated they get information from the County's web site.

- Residents *who had an opinion* were generally satisfied with curbside garbage collection services (81%), curbside recycling services (73%), and curbside bulky waste collection (57%).
- Based upon the combined percentage of “very satisfied” and “satisfied” responses among residents *who had an opinion*, 54% of residents were satisfied with the quality of cultural and art centers in Miami-Dade County.
- 58% of the residents surveyed in the UMSA had heard of Team Metro.
- 84% of those surveyed who had renewed their auto tag in Miami-Dade County during the past year were satisfied with the service they received.

Conclusions and Recommendations for Action

Overall satisfaction with the quality of service provided by Miami-Dade County increased 14% between 2003 and 2005. Some of the most significant improvements were in the areas of street maintenance and public safety. The results of the 2005 survey suggest that the County is moving in the right direction with regard to the way services are delivered to residents.

Although the County’s ratings improved in many areas, the County should use the results of this survey to help prioritize investments in the following areas:

- Areas that are identified as “high” or “very high” priorities in the importance satisfaction analysis that is provided in Section 5 of this report. Some of these areas include:
 - police efforts to prevent property crime
 - the prevention of flooding of County streets
 - the ease of finding employees who will go the extra mile to help residents with their concerns.
- Areas in the Benchmarking Analysis in Section 4 where the satisfaction ratings for Miami-Dade County are significantly lower than the levels typically achieved by other large communities. Some of these areas include:
 - communication
 - enforcement of traffic laws
 - the quality of public health services.